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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISTANBUL 001356

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2013
TAGS: PREL PGOV TU
SUBJECT: PM ERDOGAN CALLS FOR U.S. ACTION AGAINST PKK/KADEK

Classified By: Acting Consul General Stuart Smith for reasons 1.5 (b&d)

¶11. (U) Summary: In a September 12 public speech, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan called for a leading U.N. role in Iraq, Turkish contributions to Iraq's stability and reconstruction, and U.S. action against PKK/KADEK. Without attaching any specific pre-conditions, the PM said that Turkey is still considering whether to send troops to Iraq.
End Summary.

¶12. (U) Speaking at a September 12 dinner hosted by the Turkish-American Business Association (a group that includes mostly Turkish businesses), Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said that despite occasional disagreements, U.S.-Turkish relations are strong and broad-based. Though anti-Turkish lobbies have worked in Washington to undermine these relations, he said, Turkey and the U.S. have had close political, economic, and security relations for decades and will continue to enjoy such relations.

¶13. (U) On Iraq, Erdogan noted that the U.S. and Turkey share an interest in rebuilding a stable, democratic Iraq and that Turkey is already making contributions to that effort. He argued that the United Nations should play a lead role in this project, and said that Turkey is still studying whether to send Turkish troops to participate in a stabilization force. If necessary, the PM said he would send a bill to parliament for its consideration.

¶14. (U) On terrorism, Erdogan criticized both the U.S. and the West for "not taking the necessary attitude towards KADEK." While acknowledging the tragedy that occurred in the U.S. on 9/11, Erdogan argued that Turkey has also been the victim of a terrorist campaign that claimed 40,000 lives. The U.S. should act against PKK/KADEK in the same manner that they would expect Turkey to act against terrorists threatening the U.S. If this is done, he added, everything will work out.

¶15. (C) Comment: It appears that the PM may have departed from his prepared script during his remarks on terrorism and the PKK/KADEK. Many of the 500-plus participants in the dinner (who included numerous Turkish businessmen and Turkish representatives of U.S. businesses) were taken aback at the "harshness" of his comments on that topic. At the same time, they were impressed by Erdogan's grasp of the range of other issues in the relationship, as reflected not just in the speech but in comments to attendees during the hour plus he spent moving from table to table before departing.

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